

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 439 321

CG 029 888

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TITLE The Nature of Self-Integrated Authenticity in Counselors and Therapists.
PUB DATE 1997-05-00
NOTE 7p.; In: Caring in an Age of Technology. Proceedings of the International Conference on Counseling in the 21st Century (6th, Beijing, China, May 29-30, 1997); see CG 029 879.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Counselor Client Relationship; Counselor Training; Higher Education; *Interaction; *Interpersonal Relationship; *Self Actualization; Self Concept

ABSTRACT

Within a therapeutic relationship, there are two levels functioning simultaneously: first is the working level of the client and counselor; and second is the basic human level in which the counselor offers a stance of mutual respect and equality. This paper expands upon the second level by examining its nature and qualities. It posits a basic human connection characterized by what has been termed "self-integrated authenticity," which requires a level of self-development and concomitant authenticity emanating from self-authorship, a striving towards balance between conscious and unconscious, and a willingness to share one's soul that allows for qualitatively distinctive manifestations of genuineness and empathy. It uses Kegan's constructive developmental theory about the evolution of consciousness and meaning-making to analyze the essence and development of self-integrated authenticity. The paper states that implicit in the discussion of self-integrated authenticity and the qualitative differences between genuineness and empathy are critical implications for counselor education, training, and supervision. It suggests that, in order to effectively teach and train counselors who are functioning at different orders of consciousness, counselors must first assess students' orders of consciousness. It concludes that further research and discussion are needed to discover how counselor educators and supervisors can continue their own development of consciousness while empowering their students to do the same. (JDM)

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THE NATURE OF SELF-INTEGRATED AUTHENTICITY IN COUNSELORS AND THERAPISTS

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The authors wish to acknowledge the Faculty Development Fund at Saint Mary's College for financial support toward presenting this paper at the Sixth International Counseling Conference in Beijing, China, May, 1997.

Less than one hundred years ago, one's worldview or frame of reference was often defined by family, village, and town, and most people died before the age of 65 (Santrock, 1996). There was little need or expectation for one to expand upon or develop beyond this worldview, and for many people, institutional religions and family culture provided structure and meaning. Now, on the brink of the 21st century, our worldviews are still originally defined by our families and cultures, but growing numbers of people have exposure to and interactions with others from different countries, religions, and backgrounds. And, on the average, people live 22 years longer (Santrock, 1996). We are challenged daily, and for longer lifespans, to function and relate in a world that is constantly increasing in complexity, much more than even a generation ago.

These changes are influenced by rapid and complex escalation of technology and an emphasis on global circulation of information and resources. Ironically, while electronic technology allows us to interface with larger numbers of people and acquire massive amounts of information, it can also engender physical, psychic, and emotional isolation; increased use of technology runs the risk of impeding the creation and nourishment of caring and genuine relationships (Taha & Calwell, 1993). Given these risks, we believe that counselor educators and therapists are in a unique position to be cognizant of and committed to the development of relationships that require a type of connection and quality of interaction that is not necessarily achievable and often hindered through the use of technological advances.

In a previous paper (Heid & Parish, 1995), we posited that within a therapeutic relationship there are two levels functioning simultaneously: one is the working level of the client and counselor and the second is the basic human level, in which the counselor offers a stance of mutual respect and

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equality. In this paper, we will expand upon the second level by examining its nature and qualities. We will be positing a basic human connection characterized by what we have termed "self-integrated authenticity." In essence, the capacity for self-integrated authenticity requires a level of self-development and concomitant authenticity emanating from self-authorship, a striving toward balance between conscious and unconscious, and a willingness to share one's soul that allows for qualitatively distinctive manifestations of genuineness and empathy.

We will utilize Kegan's (1982, 1994) constructive developmental theory about the evolution of consciousness and meaning-making to analyze the essence and development of self-integrated authenticity. We will propose that the capacity for self-integrated authenticity is a developmental attainment that requires one to be at least approaching Kegan's fourth order of consciousness. Finally, we will suggest the implications of this perspective for counselor education and its applications to the teaching, training, and supervision of counselors and therapists.

Kegan's Constructive Developmental Theory

Kegan (1982, 1994) views human beings as meaning-makers in the sense that one's very being is the context for meaning-making and one's living is the process of meaning-making, which is the way humans organize and make sense out of their thoughts, feelings, and relationships to others and to themselves. The evolution of consciousness, or the ways in which one makes meaning, is a lifelong process that develops through five sequential "orders of consciousness."

Development from one order of consciousness to another is a process that involves a very gradual qualitative transformation in the ways one perceives the world, constructs knowledge, and relates to relationships with others and oneself. Transitions from one order to another are not strictly age-related, especially at the third, fourth, and fifth orders. Progression to the third order may begin in late adolescence and the 20s, and most adults, according to Kegan, are in this order. The fourth order may be developmentally attained after the age of 30, and Kegan estimates that about one-third of adults function at this order. The rarely attained fifth order, (perhaps about 10% of adults), is possible to achieve in middle to late adulthood.

Development from one order to another is not linear and, depending on circumstances, persons involved, and states of mind, one can function at any of the orders up to the highest order one is approaching or has attained. For example, one can respond to one client or student from the second order and another client or student from the fourth order (if one has begun the transition to fourth order); also, one could respond to the same client or student from a different order of consciousness under different circumstances. The transformation from one order to another involves a dynamic tension among the confirmation and stability of the current order, the challenges and opportunities for development to the subsequent order, and encouragement and support for the progression.

We postulate that movement to the fourth order is necessary to develop the capacity for self-integrated authenticity. For the purpose of this paper, we will discuss only the third and fourth orders of consciousness, specifically as they apply to the two levels of the therapeutic relationship. (See Blanusa, 1997, in these proceedings, for a fuller description of the third and fourth orders and examples of how modern demands and challenges require fourth order ways of thinking and being.)

The Working Level of the Therapeutic Relationship and the Third Order of Consciousness

The working level of the therapeutic relationship involves desire on the counselor's part to assist clients in achieving their personal goals. Counselors demonstrate caring and compassion for their clients and are capable of learning what we call "skill-based empathy," wherein they can listen to others and respond verbally in ways that let the clients know they are being understood. Clients may gain insight and make behavior changes. At the working level, counselors tend to rely on theories and techniques as the tools to facilitate client insight and change.

Kegan (1982, 1994) defines the third order of consciousness as involving a "self" that is defined by external expectations and "shoulds"; there is little self-authorship. We suggest that the third order self is similar to Jung's (1928) "persona," which is the unconscious projection of who one thinks others want or expect one to be. In defining the persona, Jung described clients who were in the first half of their lives as relatively uninvolved with the inner process of individuation and who tended to be concerned with external achievement and the attainment of goals of the ego. Given the self as persona that is operating at the third order of consciousness, "genuineness" takes on a particular meaning as the counselors who demonstrate genuineness from this order are offering their personas to clients. While we acknowledge that counselors at the third order can be genuine with their clients, the genuineness is curtailed by the circumscribed self that is available to the counselors' consciousness, and thus, to the clients.

At the third order, one has the capacity to internalize others' points of view and to be empathic, but the empathy is narrowed by the perspective of the third order wherein one is embedded in one's beliefs, values, norms, and assumptions, (which come from one's family and culture). One is one's beliefs, values, and assumptions, which are usually unconscious and unquestioned. To use a common metaphor, persons at the third order are like trees in the middle of a forest, and all they see and know are trees just like themselves; they are not aware that they are in a forest nor that other forests exist.

Thus, for counselors at the third order, mutuality and empathy are possible with others like themselves; differences are threatening, frightening, and incomprehensible, (which is why the range and depth of one's capacity to be empathic is limited). Often, the mutuality and empathy with others who feel and think and behave like oneself approaches fusion. There is also a

heightened awareness of others' needs and the belief (whether conscious or not) of being responsible for others' feelings and thoughts (and vice versa).

Counselors at the third order can establish a working alliance with clients and respond empathically from their personas. Counselors struggle to understand the clients' experience cognitively and emotionally, so that they can help clients achieve their therapeutic goals. Both counselors and clients can grow and change as a result of therapy at the working level. The clients' changes tend to be concrete and tangible. The counselors' changes include enhancement or honing of current clinical knowledge and therapeutic interventions.

While we acknowledge and value the work and change that occurs via the first level of the therapeutic relationship, the psychic change and growth that can occur at the second level is qualitatively different and is dependent upon the therapist's capacity to offer self-integrated authenticity to the client. Again, we propose that a therapist needs to be approaching Kegan's fourth order of consciousness in order to develop the capacity for this type of connection.

The Human Level of the Therapeutic Relationship and the Fourth Order of Consciousness

While the qualities of genuineness and empathy of third order counselors are adequate for the working level of therapy, the second level of therapy, which involves one's essential humanness or being, requires a qualitatively different intrapsychic experience and interpersonal connection, which we are calling self-integrated authenticity. There are no specialized skills or therapeutic strategies required at this level, only the capacity for the counselor to be fully present with the client. Thus, counselors need to be developing a self that goes beyond the persona of the third order, to unveil what Jung (1928) calls the "essential individuality of the person," and to be willing to share this self with the client. We propose that this second level of therapy requires a self that is functioning at the fourth order of consciousness.

The self functioning at the fourth order is self-authorizing and integrates the conscious and unconscious aspects of being. At this order, one can objectively view beliefs, values, and shoulds and consciously choose those that one wishes to have. One has values about one's values, but is not defined by the values. Similarly, one has relationships to one's relationships, rather than being in relationships; one is, therefore, sensitive to others but not responsible for others' thoughts and feelings. For example, counselors at the fourth order are responsible for their own feelings and thoughts and can critically evaluate their ideas, beliefs, values, and assumptions. Differences are not only respected but also valued.

These fourth order changes give rise to a qualitatively different fourth order empathy that is not easily quantifiable or teachable. Therapists are able to hear and empathically respond to the client, while continuing to relate to their own internal

experience and relationship to self, and they assume responsibility for their own internal process and that of the therapeutic relationship. Empathy at the fourth order is not simply a mirroring process (Jordan, 1991) in which the therapist reflects back the client's experience. Rather, it involves a reciprocal process in which therapists take in the client's experience, interact with it intrapsychically, and offer back to the client that experience as it has been touched and deeply understood by the therapists' essence of being.

When therapists function at the second level, the possible outcomes of the therapeutic relationship involve personal growth for both client and therapist. As the therapists struggle to understand the client's experience, they engage in self-reflection and inner growth occurs; they have the capacity to look internally to examine how and why they are affected by the client's experience and to take responsibility for their own feelings, attitudes, and reactions and for their relationship with the client. This ability to self-reflect in the present moment while viewing one's past experience allows for conscious decisions and behaviors for changing one's future. At the second level, having the capacities for self-integrated authenticity and fourth order empathy, therapists can offer their essential humanness for client healing to occur.

Implications for Counselor Education, Training, and Supervision

Implicit in our discussion of self-integrated authenticity and the qualitative differences between genuineness and empathy at the third and fourth orders of consciousness are several critical implications for counselor education, training, and supervision. We need to consider how to most effectively teach and train counselors who are functioning at different orders of consciousness. To do so, we must first assess students' orders of consciousness and then create training environments and teaching and supervision strategies to meet the students where they are. For example, basic skills training in counseling may be most effective with students at the second and third orders of consciousness, and perhaps even for some at the fourth order. However, fourth order students would also benefit from a training environment and relationships with faculty and supervisors that stimulate and support fourth order ways of thinking and being. (See Taylor & Marienau, 1995, regarding how educators can facilitate adult learners' transformation to fourth order.)

As we have postulated, self-integrated authenticity and mutual empathy are fourth order capacities that are not tangible or trainable; we need to consider how we can best inspire, model, and cultivate these capacities in students who are approaching or at the fourth order. Finally, in addition to meeting the students where they are and providing learning strategies that fit the needs of the various orders of consciousness, we believe that counselor educators are in an ideal position to craft environments and opportunities for people at the second and third orders to make incremental shifts toward the next order of consciousness. Further research and discussion are needed to

discover how counselor educators and supervisors can continue their own development of consciousness while empowering their students to do the same.

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